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589 765 dition that she does not remarry; the idea being that as long as the bones remain in the widow's keeping, the spirit of her husband is still with her. On this account many wives who revere their husband's memories, and who do not contemplate remarriage, purposely keep the bones for a long time. If a 587 765 widow marries, even after the customary taboo period of one year, whilst her deceased husband's bones are still in her keeping, [346] she is generally looked down upon. Her children in such a case perform the ceremony of handing over the bones of their father to his clan in a building specially erected for the purpose. The widow cannot enter therein, or even go near it, whilst the ceremony is proceeding, no matter whether the *jing sang*, or the price for removing the taboo after a husband's death, has been 595 paid to the husband's clan or not. There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis. Unlike the Thibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time. Certainly at the present day they are monandrists.* Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis; such a practice would naturally not be in vogue amongst a people who observe the matriarchate. There are instances, however, of men having wives other than those they have regularly married, and in the War country children by such wives enjoy rights to their father's acquired property equally with the children by the legally 582 married wife. As the clans are strictly exogamous, a Khasi • 688 cannot take a wife from his own clan; to do this would entail 764 the most disastrous religious, as well as social consequences. For to marry within the clan is the greatest sin a Khasi can commit, and would cause excommunication by his kinsfolk and the refusal of funeral ceremonies at death, and his bones would [115] not be allowed a resting-place in the sepulchre of the clan. To give a list of all the Khasi exogamous clans would perhaps serve 614 no useful purpose, but I have prepared from information, kindly 582 furnished me by the Siems of Khyrim and Cherrapunji, a list of the clans in those States which will be found in Appendices A and B. These will suffice as examples. It will be seen from the Cherra list that the different divisions of the Diengdoh clan, viz. Lalu, Diengdoh-bah, Diengdoh-kylla, are prohibited from intermarriage; this is due to those branches of the clan being

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should inherit the property and not men. The rule amongst the Khasis is that the youngest daughter "holds" the religion, "*ka bat ka niam.*" Her house is called, "*ka iing seng,*" and it is here that the members of the family assemble to witness her performance of the family ceremonies. Hers is, therefore, the largest share of the family property, because it is she whose duty it is to perform the family ceremonies, and propitiate the family ancestors. The other daughters, however, on their mother's death are entitled, each of them, to a share of their mother's property, although the youngest daughter gets the lion's share, e.g. the family jewellery, and the family house, and the greater part of what it contains. The youngest daughter cannot dispose of the house without the unanimous consent of her sisters. If the youngest daughter dies, she is succeeded by the next youngest daughter, and so on. All the daughters are bound to repair the house of the youngest daughter free of cost. In the event of the youngest daughter changing her religion, or committing an act of *sang*, or taboo, she loses her position in the family, and is succeeded by her next youngest sister, as in the case of a death. Failing daughters, inheritance would pass by the "knight's move" to the sister's youngest daughter, who would be succeeded by her youngest daughter, and so on. Failing sister's daughters succession would revert to the mother's sisters and their female descendants. In the Jaintia Hills the inheritance of all real property passes from mother to youngest daughter. No man in the uplands of the Jaintia Hills can possess landed property, unless it is self-acquired property. In the Jaintia Hills, if a man dies and leaves acquired property, his heir will be his mother, if alive, excluding wife, sons, and daughters. If the wife, however, undertakes not to re-marry, she will inherit half of her husband's property, which at her death will descend to her youngest daughter by him.

Amongst Khasis all property which has been acquired by a man before marriage is considered to belong to his mother; indeed it may be said to belong to the man's *kur*, or clan, such property being called by Khasis, "*ka mai iing kur*" (the earnings of the house of the clan). After marriage, if there are children, the case is different, provided that the property

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GENNA.

784 The word *genna* is one in common use amongst the Naga tribes. It seems to be a matter of doubt whether the word belongs to any of the numerous languages or dialects spoken by these tribes; but for our purposes it may be taken to mean *taboo*. The Khasi word *sang*, which implies an interdiction either religious or social from doing any particular thing, might have been employed; but as the word *genna* is so commonly used when speaking of taboos amongst the hill tribes of this province, I have thought fit to employ it here. The word *genna*, or taboo, may be held to include the Khasi *sang*. Taboos amongst the Khasis, Wárs and Lynngams may be divided into 784 two sections; (*a*) general, and (*b*) special. Instances of general 609 taboo have not been found amongst the Khasis, but the follow- 688 ing taboo called *Ka sang kla* amongst the Wár villages of Sohlar and Nongjri is peculiar, and therefore worthy of description. Its chief peculiarity is that during the time the *sang kla* continues, the inhabitants of these two villages are not allowed to associate with foreigners. This *genna* takes place twice a year, in the months of June and November, and lasts for a month each time. During the *genna* foreigners are not allowed to stay the night in these two villages, and the villagers must not sleep the night outside their villages. If they do not return home for the night, they are subjected to a fine. There is a prohibition against eating, smoking, or chewing betel-nut with foreigners 784 during the period. The above is the only instance of general 609 taboo that I have been able to find amongst the Wárs, but in 582 the Lynngam villages there is a taboo on all outsiders at the time of the village pujas. Such a taboo amongst the Lynngams is not to be wondered at, as they have probably imbibed the notion from their Garo mothers, intermarriages between Lynngams and Garos being common. The Garos, like other Thibeto-Burmans, have numerous taboos. There are numerous 582 instances of special taboos among the Khasis. *Kaba* 784 *shong sang*, or marrying within the *kur* or clan, is the 783 most important taboo of all, and is regarded as the most 764 serious offence a Khasi can commit. It admits of no expiation, and the bones and ashes of the offender cannot be placed in the family tomb.

784 for a cremation). See table I, picture 2, "The heathen Khasi village Raliang with a "holy wood" (law kyntang) in the background."

6. Giving or taking anything at all with the left hand.
7. Stepping over the corpse of another person.
8. Killing an animal or bird without having previously strewn rice on its head.
9. Using the milk of the cow or the goat.
10. Completing all kinds of started sewing or basket weaving for pregnant women.
11. Pregnant women are not allowed to accompany any funeral procession.
12. The husband of a pregnant woman is forbidden to roof the house (straw roof) or to make a handle for a hatchet or an axe (ka wait - ka da).
13. Speaking with anyone at all as long as the threshing of the rice lasts, unless it is with the co-workers of the man or of the woman.
14. Variously the use of pork, dried fish, melons, lemons, etc. is forbidden.

784 Violating the sang is punished by the
68 deity. Thus several Khasi explained after the
342 great earthquake of June 12, 1897: "Because you built your houses of stone and fastened the planks with nails, it has so happened that everything has tumbled down, because god does not wish stone and despises nails. Formerly we too built only with wood and bamboo and used bast for making things fast and for binding, but today people have become proud and have built with stone. That is why this has happened; god

784
●682 hates stone; he does not wish any lime." (14)
342

14. P.A. Münzloher, S.D.S. Die apostolische Präfektur Assam [The Apostolic Prefecture of Assam] (Rome, 1899), p. 83.

4. Egg Throwing (shat-pylleng)

787 The most common of all the oracles of the
782 Khasi is egg throwing (shat-pylleng). A great deal has already been written about it. (15)

[113]

15. P. Dr. C. Becker, Das Eierwerfen der Khasi [Egg Throwing Among the Khasi] Anthropos XII-XIII (1917-1918), pp. 494-496.

I will only add here the prayer of the sacrificer u nongshat-pylleng. It is not an actual prayer, at least the nongshat-pylleng is not bound to any formula. The sacrificer speaks approximately thus:

Ko lengsam khun ka blei, ko banang ko batip ko ba lah ko baiai, nga pynthiah nga pyndem halor ka diengshat ka diengkhein, ka duwan ka dupat, a kynrad ngan kylli ngan

O thou egg of the oracle, thou daughter of the goddess, thou whom thou knowest and art aware of (art able to) thou remainest thou (stayest); I put thee down here on the board (16)

16. Cf. Table II, Picture 1. [419]

' togkit katne ba long shitom ka lanot ka shoh ka ther ka shit ka syang ka pisa ka lynga ia ka met u

on the oracular wood, on the altar, o mistress, I question and ponder (would like to question,

Thus the dance continues for hours at a time amidst the noise of the music. Thousands of spectators who do not seem to get tired throng around the great place. In the afternoon, at about three o'-clock /898/ the dance, which plays a large part in all the religious festivities is ended. 535

Then preparations are made for the large sacrifice. In front of the house of the S'iem sād several boards are placed in a row beside each other, and in front of them at certain intervals twelve little heaps of loam are made. Music now plays inside of the iīng sād. All the sacrificial gifts are given to the S'iem sād in front of the rishoṭ Blei and then distributed to the sacrificers by her. These then go out of the hut to the place of the sacrifice. There are twelve of them, namely the six official sacrificial priests of the kingdom and several lyngdohs from the villages; the Soh Blei is at their head, wearing a special sacrificial coat (cf. Fig. 4);[1] while the others wear everyday clothes. Each one carries a dish in his hand with some rice, pounded flour for kpu and rynsi, betel nuts and the pepper leaf that belongs with them, a small young hen, a water container, leaves of the Khasi oak tree, as well as a small gourd bottle with rice liquor. The dish and the water container of the sacrificial priests are of ornamented brass, those of the Soh Blei of silver -- all clean and polished until gleaming. 796 782

The spectators are arranged to the right and the left of the sacrificers, so that there is a wide alleyway open through the middle of the place to the gate of the board fence which surrounds the place and the iīng sād. Several men are constantly busy keeping the crowd within these bounds. No one may come in through the gate during the whole ceremony, because the god enters here during the sacrifice - therefore the broad path must be left open. If anyone should chance to wish to come in through the gate during the performance of the sacrifice, he is driven back with loud shouts. If he dared to come in anyway, in earlier times he would have been a child of death; now the fear of the English government might protect him to a certain extent, although this could hardly be an absolute guaranty of his life because of the religious excitement of the people. [688]

The twelve now squat down on the boards placed in front of the iīng sād, the Soh Blei in the middle. Behind them the S'iem sād sits alone on the steps which lead from the iīng sād to the place of the sacrifice. Somewhat further back sits the S'iem surrounded by his Mentris and relatives (cf. Fig 7).[1] The Soh Blei sets the example in all that follows; the others watch him and copy him. While each of the sacrificers slaughters only a small hen or a goat, the Soh Blei has

[1] [for illustrations, see category 116, pp 14-18 --- Analyst]

776 778 divinities of the forest and of the chase. The little basket is attached to a post in the hut; the special divinities of the clan-family are supposed to have their dwelling there; two hazelnut twigs fastened underneath symbolize their power. The gourd bottles are used as containers for the sacrificial drink of rice liquor. (6)

6. Cf. Die Nongkrem-Puja, /The Nongkrem Puja/, loc cit.

422 [301] As treasures, which are handed down from generation to generation, are considered the rich ornaments of gold and silver, the heavy chains of coral, and the silk scarves, which are worn by the women at dancing ceremonies.

Also those things which the family huts contain in the way of furnishings and utensils, such as baskets, mats, lances, shields, arrows and bows, and brass pots for cooking and for water, earthen containers and brass plates are considered common property of the family.

421 425 ● 688 /132/ The clan mother at the time has the entire property in her hands; she is the legal and sole guardian and manager of the property. Nothing can be lent even without her permission. No part of either the movable or immovable family possessions may be sold without her agreement. For the execution of the proper legal deed, as she is often ignorant of writing, she must place her fingerprint. Nothing may ever be given away: that would be an insult to the clan divinity since that would not mean treasuring and honoring their property but giving it away as being of no value. As a punishment for that the clan /stamm/ would also lose its other possessions and then live in poverty and disgrace. The individual members of the clan could sometimes be recruited for work for other clan-families as a kind of slave (mrau). But they may not be taken up in their society as they do not belong to that clan and the clan gods of that family would not permit it. Therefore if, for example, a clan-family has rice fields which they do not cultivate and would gladly give to poorer relatives, they must at least receive the smallest rent as a charge for it. This consists annually of a gourd bottle of rice liquor, which has the value of about 70 pfennigs to honor the household divinities.

Before the clan mother gives her permission for the sale of common property, she listens to the advice of the other members of the clan. Actually according to the old tribal custom things should be as little sold as given away. It is said that in ages past the original ancestors, whom the individual clans reverence as divinities, apportioned out this their needs of field and wood, and these are supposed 421 to form their unsalable clan property (nongrim). To let it get out of 425 one's possession would therefore be insulting the gods. However, that

could not prevent individuals from becoming needy through misfortune 421
or laziness and their tryng to rent a part of their property for an annual 425
payment or for a sum needed once. This is called ban die pan, literally: begging to buy. The sense of relinquishing by lending /133/ is contained in this. For example, a field is worth 300 reichsmarks. Fifty or 100 reichsmarks are accepted for it and the creditor remains the owner of the field until the money is repaid. This type of purchase occurs frequently. There are frequently traders (nongkhaii) who try to use such purchases to their own advantage. They turn over the field to the debtor for further cultivation in return for payment in produce of 50 to 70 per cent of the harvest. After several years the whole field is their property. Aside from this method, it also happens that instead of being able to repay the money the people need still further sums. In that case then the entire price of 300 reichsmarks is paid and the actual purchase is considered completed; that is called ban die lut; literally: totally, completely sold. A family-clan which gradually loses its property in this manner descends into poverty and need. There is nothing else for it to do than to look for work elsewhere, to rent land or to sell the children as a kind of slaves to better situated people. If 40 reichsmarks are paid for a child of about 10 years, he remains in the bondage of the buyer until the money can be repaid. That happens only rarely. Besides food and the most necessary clothing only one rupee is deducted annually as wage from the purchase price thus, practically, the child belongs to the buyer for the duration of his life. [567]

It is the duty of individual members of a family clan to work together so that the clan property will be maintained and will produce 613 688
the necessary amount for the maintenance of all. The clan mother must oversee primarily that the appropriate customs and usages are preserved. She is held in high esteem by all. To do something against her wish to offend her, to call her insulting names, or to go so far as to strike her is considered sang (taboo), a severe crime that causes misfortune. It is a great sin (pop) and a thoroughly great disgrace (sngewsih eh tam) for the whole clan.(7) As long as a member 613 688 782

7. Also considered similar crimes are selling clan property in secret, incest, desecrating burial places in a coarse manner, making use of holy grounds or woods.

/134/ of the family has committed such a crime and has not begged pardon from the clan mother and the elders of the clan, perhaps with the words: pardon me, I have committed an error (to map ia nga leh

613 bakla); and as long as the expiatory sacrifice, in the form of pigs and
● 688 goats, determined by the elders of the family and by the sacrificial
682 priest (lyngdoh) has not been offered, the sinning member is considered excluded from the family and the family sacrifices. But even after being accepted again a certain stain still clings to him.

613 But it is also the duty of the clan mother to care for the needs of the members of her family clan with regard to food, clothing, and the like. She divides the fruits of the harvests according to the needs of the individual. She goes or sends to market to trade, to buy, or to sell. She takes care of the common purse and even the masculine members of the clan have to ask her for money when they wish to drink rice liquor or buy clothing. There the clan mother is generous
[562] rather than niggardly. This dependent relationship of the men is not considered unworthy at all or shameful. It is the matriarchal form and ancient custom. Nevertheless, the position of the men in the family clan is an esteemed one. Even the name they are called by has an important sound: Rangbah, Basan (oldest ones, advisers). On them falls often the work in the field and wood or the protection of the family; bow and arrow are handed to them as cradle gifts. In the more important family matters the clan mother consults with them. At the giving of the name, during a wedding, a funeral, or cremation the clan mother steps almost completely into the background, also during quarrels and court hearings before the chief (Doloi) or king (S'iem). She is still always influential with her advice, but the actual appearance, activity and judgments is the business of the men. The smaller,
[182] everyday sacrifices she performs in the clan hut; but she can also let these /135/ be performed by her sons. At larger sacrificial ceremonies which are offered by several family clans at the same time, by whole
[793] villages or even by one of the Khasi states, only the men are active as sacrificial priests.

613 With regard to the husbands of the clan mother and of the feminine
596 members, they are not considered members of the family clan of the women at all. They are only considered the begetters. They work and live in their own clan, participate in their sacrifices and burial places. The father has no further influence in the raising of the children, who belong entirely to the clan of the mother. But usually they have no obligation, unless the wife and children are impoverished. Even then their care comes in second place after that of members of their own
[593] clan. Nevertheless the husband is honored and is addressed by "Mr." (kynrad) by his wife. She would consider it disgraceful to approach him impertinently. Where the property of a clan has been dissolved or Christian customs introduced, the husband lives and works together with his wife and children.

Because of her whole position as guardian of the inherited religion and customs, it is not frequent that such a woman breaks with the ancestor cult. If this does happen, it does not necessarily mean that she loses the entire property. That depends really on the position the other members of the family take. If they are all still firm heathens, who wish to have nothing to do with Christianity, they can force the clan mother to give everything up. The high respect for her is frequently so great, however, that either the whole clan or at least a part of it decides to take the same step and change religions with the clan mother. The part that remains heathen will certainly propose a division of the family property. This is also possible in other cases. 428 613 797 671

4. Division of the Family Property.

Although it is rare, the weal and woe of a family-clan can require that a family-clan be split into two clans /Clan/ and that a division of the common property be undertaken. The basis for this is if the family /Geschlecht/ becomes too big, if the elders in the family council /308/ are no longer united and hate and revenge threaten to destroy, if a part of the clan /Clan/ tries to seize the better fields by violence and refuses to deliver the harvest for the common need, if one branch has brought the whole clan /Sippe/ dishonor and shame by false oaths, incest, revenge, treachery or some other severe crime. Only the guilty party will be excluded from the clan /Clan/ in such cases, if he remains stubborn and impenitent. But if he begs for forgiveness with his lips and participates in the expiatory sacrifice, forgiveness will not be refused him. But a certain inner tension and bad feeling often remain behind. 613 578 688

At the conversion to another religion, it often depends on how the clan mother and also the family elders are inclined towards the religion in question, and also on who is changing religions. If it is only brothers, sons, nephews, or grandsons, of the clan mother, a division is out of the question, since the men are not capable of inheriting. But if it is the youngest or next youngest daughter or even the sister of the clan mother, then a division of property can be undertaken. A clan mother after all is so attached to her child or her nearest blood relatives that she would not like to push them entirely away from herself unless she were completely set against the religion in question and angered. If that should be so in individual cases, the heiress concerned will still consider, whether it is not more advisable to wait to change her religion until the clan mother has closed her eyes and she then has free play. Then that which was mentioned at the conclusion of the previous section can occur. 797 428 425 613